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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
15 June 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Current Soviet Role in the Middle East Crisis

Summary

Moscow appears to be escalating its diplomatic and verbal support for the Arabs now that the cease-fire seems to be holding. As part of an increasingly intensive effort to refurbish its own image and to win the diplomatic "war" in the aftermath of the Arab military defeat, Soviet propaganda attacks on Tel Aviv and its "imperialist backers" are becoming virulent. The USSR has threatened to take sanctions against Israel, and diplomatic moves in the UN are under way.

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It appears to presage a strong Soviet effort to win approval of a resolution condemning Israel as an aggressor and perhaps a bid for UN sanctions against Tel Aviv. The Soviets remained determined throughout the Middle East conflict to avoid a confrontation with the West and to bring about a cease-fire.

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared jointly by the Office of Current Intelligence and the Office of Research and Reports, and was discussed with analysts of the Office of National Estimates.

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There still is no evidence that Russian military dispositions have changed, although modest deliveries of Soviet arms to Middle Eastern clients may continue, partly for public relations effect and partly to restore at least a minimal air-defense capability to Egypt.

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The Soviet Position in the Middle East

1. The Soviet threat to take sanctions against Israel has the twofold purpose of keeping pressure on the Israeli Government for the maintenance of the cease-fire and appeasing Arab demands for more resolute action by "Eastern bloc states." Moscow remains determined to maintain the cease-fire which they were instrumental in achieving even at the risk of Arab dissatisfaction. 25X1

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New Soviet diplomatic moves against Israel reflect the concern of the Soviets over the weakness of their position--and that of the Arabs--in the Middle East.

2. Fedorenko's statements in the UN and the reports in Soviet propaganda media continue to follow the Arab line and to charge Israel with aggression. Also, Moscow, linking the US with the Israeli position, has condemned US policy as defending aggression and ignoring the rights of the victims of that aggression. The hasty convocation of the Communist "summit meeting" and the USSR's subsequent breaking of relations with Israel are further indications of Moscow's efforts to regain favor with the Arabs. These measures are still little more than gestures, although they presage an intensified bid to refurbish the Soviet image with the Arabs.

3. Moscow's aim throughout the Middle East conflict has been to avoid a military confrontation with the West.

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Soviet military assistance to the Arabs will be carefully designed to minimize the risks of confrontation with the West.

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The Soviet Military Status

4. There is no evidence of a Soviet military alert or of any redeployments of Soviet ground or air combat units. The operations of Soviet ground and air combat units appear to be generally normal. [redacted] 25X1

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In any case, if the cease-fire holds, there would be no compulsion for the Soviets to intervene. Moreover, several

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